

after two o'clock, Governor Harris of Tennessee, who, after the death of General Johnston, had joined the staff of Beauregard in action, taking me aside, asked if I did not regard the day as going against us irremediably, and whether there was not danger in tarrying so long in the field as to be unable to withdraw in good order. I answered that I thought it would soon be our proper course to retreat. Having an opportunity a moment later to speak to General Beauregard in private, I brought the subject before him in almost these words:

"General, do you not think our troops are very much in the condition of a lump of sugar thoroughly soaked with water, but yet preserving its original shape, though ready to dissolve? Would it not be judicious to get away with what we have?"

"I intend to withdraw in a few moments," was his reply.

Calling upon his aids-de-camp present, he dispatched them with orders to the several

corps commanders to begin the rearward movement. He also directed me to collect as many of the broken organizations as I could,—both of infantry and artillery,—post them in the best position I might find, and hold it until the whole army had passed rearward of it. Such a position I quickly found on an elevated ridge in full view of the chapel and the ground to the right and left of it, and also somewhat more elevated, rising abruptly toward the enemy and receding gently toward Corinth. There I collected and posted some two thousand infantry, making them lie down and rest. I also placed in battery some twelve or fifteen guns, so as to sweep the approach from the direction of the enemy. There also I remained until after four o'clock, or until all the Confederate forces had retired, General Breckenridge's troops being the last, and without seeing a single Federal soldier. I then retired, carrying from the field the caissons loaded down with muskets and rifles picked from the field.

Thomas Jordan.

MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

The Offer of Union Command to General A. S. Johnston.

[THE following statement was written in response to an inquiry by us as to the details of the offer of high command referred to in the two foregoing papers.—Ed.]

The circumstances which gave rise to the expressed desire of the administration in 1861 to retain General Albert Sidney Johnston in the Federal army were as follows:

Early in April, 1861, while on duty in the adjutant-general's office in Washington, I learned that Colonel Sumner had been dispatched *incog.* to California, with secret orders to assume command of the department of the Pacific, and that this unusual course had been prompted by the fear that the forts and arsenals and garrisons on that coast would be placed in the hands of the secessionists by General Johnston, the then commander, who was reported to be arranging to do so.

I had just received a letter from General Johnston expressing his pleasure at the large and handsome parade of State troops in San Francisco, on February 22d, and at the undoubted loyalty to the Union cause of the whole Pacific coast, and also his earnest hope that the patriotic spirit manifested in California existed as strongly in all other States, and would as surely be maintained by them as it would be in the Pacific States in case of attempted secession.

Fearing the effect of the superseding orders upon a high-toned and sensitive officer, one whom I esteemed as a brother, and earnestly desired to be secured to our cause, I induced Major McDowell to show the letter to Secretary Cameron, and to urge every effort to keep General Johnston from leaving the service. His

superior qualifications, his influence among prominent citizens at the South, and especially among his relatives in his native State, Kentucky,—which it was exceedingly desirable to keep in the Union,—were strong inducements to these efforts. My desire was met as cordially and earnestly as it existed, and I was authorized to send, as I did through my friend "Ben Holliday," in New York, for transmission by telegraph to St. Louis, and thence by his "pony express" to San Francisco, the following message: "I take the greatest pleasure in assuring you, for the Secretary of War, that he has the utmost confidence in you, and will give you the most important command and trust on your arrival here. Sidney is appointed to the Military Academy." This message reached General Johnston after the arrival of Colonel Sumner.

In response to the above, and by the same channel of communication, I received this message: "I thank you and my friends for efforts in my behalf. I have resigned and resolved to follow the fortunes of my State." His letter of resignation was soon received, and put an end to all hope, especially as Texas—which had then seceded—was his adopted State.

I felt in 1861, as I now know, that the assertion that General Johnston intended to turn over to the secessionists the defenses of California, or any part of the regular army, was false and absurd. Under no circumstances, even if intended, could such a plan have succeeded, especially with the regular army. But no such breach of trust was intended, nor would any graduate of West Point in the army have committed or permitted it. It had no better foundation than the statement of Senator Conness of California, who three years later urged and secured the assignment of Gen-

eral McDowell to command on the Pacific coast, on the ground that after the war for the Union should have ended there would be in California a more powerful rebellion than that then existing among the Southern States.

Fitz John Porter.

NEW YORK, December 8, 1884.

General Robert Patterson and the Battle of Bull Run.

APPENDED to General Beauregard's paper in the November CENTURY, on "The Battle of Bull Run," is the following foot-note:

"It was Patterson upon whom the Government at Washington depended to neutralize Johnston as an element in McDowell's contest with Beauregard. But, whether from the faultiness of Scott's instructions or of Patterson's understanding of them, or from his failure or inability to execute them,—all of which is matter of controversy,—Patterson neither held Johnston nor reinforced McDowell.—ED."

General Patterson's duty was to assist in carrying out the plans of the general-in-chief when they were made known to him. There is no official record that General Scott gave any order to General Patterson to reinforce General McDowell.

Some nineteen years ago General Patterson, having sought justice in vain through every official channel, published his "Narrative of the Campaign in the Valley of the Shenandoah in 1861," in which he thus summarizes his defense:

"(1) That I have already courted an investigation of any charge that could be brought against me; (2) that my whole course was entirely approved by the officers attached to my command, whom I was instructed to consult; (3) that I complied with every order issued to me; (4) that I kept Johnston from joining Beauregard, not only on the day I was directed to do so, but for five days afterward; (5) that I was never informed that the battle had not been fought, at the time indicated, though within reach of a telegraph, but on the contrary, the only dispatch received convinced me that the battle had been fought; (6) that for the delay in fighting it I was in no wise responsible; (7) that the general-in-chief, when I told him I was not strong enough, in my opinion, to attack Johnston, could have ordered me to do so, if he differed

from me, as I told him all the circumstances, and asked, 'Shall I attack?' (8) that I informed him that Johnston had gone to General Beauregard, and he himself, in his comments on my testimony (see page 241, vol. II., 'Conduct of the War'), admits that he knew it before delivering battle on the 21st of July."

After a long and useful life, wherein he never hesitated to obey his country's call, General Patterson has passed away. His son now speaks for him.

Robert E. Patterson.

UNITED SERVICE CLUB, PHILADELPHIA, NOV. 10, 1884.

[While we gladly give place to the above communication, it is proper to say that the object of the foot-note was to make clear to the reader the importance of certain events in the campaign of Bull Run, and not to assign responsibility for those events; and it was to guard against such an inference that we expressly stated this responsibility to be matter of controversy.—ED.]

Uniform of the Highlanders at Bull Run.

IN a foot-note to the "Recollections of a Private" in the November CENTURY, it is said that the Seventy-ninth New York wore the Highland dress at the battle of Bull Run. If by that is meant the "kilts," it is an error. It is true that all the officers and many of the men did wear that uniform when we left the city in June, 1861, and on dress-parade occasions in Washington. But when we went into Virginia, it was laid aside, together with the plaid trowsers worn by all the men on ordinary occasions, and we donned the ordinary blue. Captain ——— was the only one who insisted on wearing the kilts on the march to Bull Run, claiming that as the Highlanders wore that dress in India, it would be quite as comfortable in Virginia; but while chasing a pig, the day before we reached Centreville, the kilts were the cause of his drawing upon himself the ridicule of the whole regiment. When we started for the battle-field on that Sunday morning he, also, appeared in ordinary blue uniform.

William Todd,

Company B, Seventy-ninth New York (Highlanders).

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Some Practicable Retorms.

THE experience of the recent Presidential campaign illuminates the path of political reform with respect to two or three matters of great importance, concerning which there should be no difference of opinion.

The first is the separation, in a few of the States, of the State and Congressional elections from the Presidential election. Twenty years ago the State elections were held separately in many of the States; but the number of these separate elections has been gradually reduced, until the only Northern States now holding

elections before November are Vermont, Maine, and Ohio. Pennsylvania was once the "Keystone State" of the political arch, but its citizens grew weary of that distinction, and transferred their State contest to November. Indiana was a "pivotal" State four years ago, but the experience of that campaign sufficed for Indiana, and the October election was abolished. In West Virginia the same change was made at the last election. The remaining States may well follow the good example. The fewer these preliminary elections become, the greater will be the injury suffered by the States that retain them. The people of these States